

Erie County Opiate Epidemic Task Force Meeting Minutes



Location: Erie County Fire Training Academy, 3359 Broadway, Cheektowaga, NY 14225
Date: Tuesday, June 6, 2017
Time: 5:30 - 7:00 PM
Attendees: Deb Smith, John Gaeddert, Barbara Howard, Paul Post, Mary Beth Konosky, Katey McEvoy, Cathy Zawodzinski, Sue Boyle, Jackie Sullivan

Agenda items

Ongoing:

1. Future meeting dates are as follows: July 11; August 1; September 5; October 3; November 7 (provided that doesn't conflict with Election Day); and December 5.
2. Support Group Meetings are as follows:
 - a. Stutzman: located at the Stutzman Treatment Center, 360 Forest Ave, Buffalo. Meetings are held the 4th Wednesday of the month at 6:30 PM. Dates are June 28; July 26; August 23; September 27; October 25; November 22; and December 27.
 - b. Hamburg Senior Center: 4050 Southwestern Blvd in Hamburg. Meetings are held the 3rd Tuesday of the month at 6 PM. Dates are June 20; July 18; August 15; September 19; October 17; November 21; and December 26.

Old Business:

1. Deb will review meeting notes for March and April.
2. Walk 4 Hope: Took place Saturday, May 20 at Cazenovia Park. 40+ Narcan trainings were completed.
3. Increased Funds for Services to Address Opiate Addiction: The legislature has freed up \$1 million dollars to help battle the opiate epidemic. (WBFO article [here](#).)
 - a. Some of the money has already been spoken for, including jobs for the Medical Examiner's Office. (It may also include a "Transition Specialist" for the jails to help connect or re-connect people to services; that's under discussion.)
 - b. A large chunk of the funds (\$500,000) will be made available as grants: An RFP (Request for Proposals) will be posted on the County website (in June). The criteria are:
 - i. The project must be new and innovative
 - ii. It must not be funded through other means
4. Billboards- has there been an increase in Hotline usage since the billboards went up?
5. Totally Buffalo Festival: Took place Saturday, May 27 at Buffalo RiverWorks. Not many trainings took place, but overall the public's tone has improved since the Erie County Fair last year: Stigma is down somewhat, and there is less resistance to the idea of treatment.

New Business:

1. Erie County Fair

- i. Fair dates August 9-20; dates for the Family Group are: Thursday, August 10; Saturday, August 12; Tuesday, August 15; and Saturday, August 19.
 - b. We're requesting people to be available in 4 hour shifts (possible coverage by Angels). The workgroup distributed a sign-up sheet for tentative commitments.
2. Candlelight Vigil for Overdose Awareness Day: Thursday, August 31 at 6:30 PM.
 - a. Tentative location: The LaSalle Park band shell. (The County is working to verify this.)
 - b. A poster has been drafted, but the location must be confirmed, and the guest list firmed up, before it is distributed.
3. Pathways and Trees: need to identify spots for memorial, and plan accordingly
4. Butterfly Releases (Erie County and Lakeside Funeral Home): upcoming later in summer
5. Genesis Center - Narcan trainings: There is interest in holding them monthly.
6. Treatment Improvements-
 - a. Discharges and re-linkages: There are multiple reports of treatment facilities ejecting patients for minor infractions (smoking cigarettes, socializing with the opposite sex, etc.). The Family Group knows how hard it is for people to find treatment spots, so they're wondering if some of the rules can be relaxed to accommodate for the difficulties of recovery. And if someone is discharged for such reasons, is there a way to re-link them with another facility?
 - b. Warning time for families: there's been accounts of people getting discharged from treatment or from jail without anyone else being notified; this meant that family members could not be there to provide support. If the person being released is emancipated or an adult, then there is no legal requirement for others to be notified. However, the Family Group is wondering if someone can be listed as a "designated contact," to be called in emergencies or when the person is released.
7. Development of meetings through electronic communications: The Family Group wants to set up a Facebook page (the focus would be on keeping it healthy, positive, and solution-based).
 - a. Support groups would include Voices of Recovery and CARA.
 - b. One of the solutions would be "preparing people to get better": getting families and the people with Substance Use Disorders in the mind-set of "this is a disease that must be managed; but when the person is ready to seek treatment, resources are available."
8. Court Cases (No updates)
9. ADA getting list
10. Information Forms for Law Enforcement
 - a. We know people want to report drug dealers to the police; however, we also want people to stay safe, while collecting enough useful information to assist police.
 - b. The Buffalo Police Department has a [form](#) people can use to report suspected criminal activity. It's also possible to report tips via email to (tips@bpdny.org), or by phone using the Confidential Tip Line at 847-2255.
 - c. The Task Force is working to set up Neighborhood Watch trainings for July (next month!). There would be five trainings, one for each Buffalo police district.

- d. Once we conduct the initial batch of trainings, we'd like to reach out to the suburbs as well.
11. Building Facebook/Website for information availability for our community to have access to resources/ events/ talking points and options: listing local events and resources.
12. Upcoming community event: "Colton's Journey to Liberation," Friday 23 June 2017 in Hamburg, NY.
13. The group is still interested in assembling a Speaker's Bureau who could talk at local events.

Action items	Owner(s)	Deadline	Status
Issue invitations to speakers for August 31 st ; firm up the guest list	Deb Smith		
Set up Neighborhood Watch trainings	Task Force		
Check with Crisis Services, ask if Hotline call numbers have increased since billboards were deployed	John Gaeddert		In progress (should be available for July meeting)
Verify dates and locations for butterfly releases	John Gaeddert		Cannot complete; ECDOH is not involved in the butterfly releases
Find a list of "informational criteria" for reporting suspicious activity to police	John Gaeddert		